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Finance and Government Operations Commission Meeting Minutes

Middletown, Connecticut

January 28, 2014

Municipal Building Room 208

7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING:

Present: Thomas Serra, David Bauer, Hope Kasper, Deb Kleckowski, Carl Erlacher, William Russo, William Oliver, Mary Bartolotta, Wayne Bartolotta, Acting Fire Chief Rob Kronenberger, Cheryl Wolcott, Lynda MacPherson, Michael Skott, Patricia Charles, Joseph Krononberger, Rich Meier, Mark Langton, Captain John Lozefski, Officer Richard Batts, Faith Jackson, Damon Braasch, City Attorney Brigham Smith, Ed McKeon

Absent: None

1. Thomas Serra called the meeting to order and requested a motion to approve the minutes from the November 26, 2013 Finance and Government meeting, approved unanimously.

-Approved Unanimously-

2. Public Comments from items on the agenda.

-None -

Hope Kasper asked to have the Teamster Upgrades that are on the Council Agenda be added to tonight's Finance and Government Agenda. Thomas Serra suggested adding it at the end. Vote was unanimous to approve the addition.

3. The following Departments are scheduled to discuss their budget and programs:

- **Legal – Appropriation Request for up to \$60,000 for MPD Independent Investigation**

City Attorney Brigham Smith explained the \$60,000 appropriation request to cover the legal costs for the ongoing investigation regarding Chief McKenna which began in October 2013. Brig explained that he had spoken with the State's Attorney office and was advised that this was the correct way to proceed. Commission an independent investigation, due the fact finding and once the investigation is completed the State's Attorney's office will review the finding and if there is evidence there, they will proceed accordingly, if not then they won't. Mary Bartolotta made the motion to approve and Deb Kleckowski seconded with an amendment stating it was not to exceed the \$60,000 and if the investigation should exceed the amount appropriated today that they would have to come back before this committee for the approval for additional funding.

-Approved unanimously as amended to send to the Council Floor-

- **City Auditor, Joe Kask – respond to F & G Committee questions related to FY 12-13 Annual Audit Reports**

Joe Kask, City Auditor from Bloom Shapiro explained that based upon the results of the audit his firm offered a clean opinion on the financial statements for the City of Middletown on June 30, 2013 and in addition to that they also offered a clean opinion on Compliance; State Financial Assistance; ED 001 and a stand- alone clean opinion on ECRRA.

Joe also expressed his appreciation to the efficient and dedicated staff in the Finance Department who contributed to its preparation.

-Informational Only -

- **Fire – Appropriation Request for \$25,000 to be transferred from Fire Fund Balance, to new expenditure line, for purchase of exercise equipment; discussion of bonding for purchase of new fire engine**

Deputy Chief Robert Kronenberger discussed the \$25,000 Appropriation request to transfer monies into a new line item for the purchase of exercise equipment for the Fire Department.

Hope suggested that he speak with the Risk Manager regarding possible funding of \$10,000 from CIRMA which may be used for this purchase.

Mary stated that they utilize any funds available from CIRMA first and use this as the offset.

Thomas Serra suggested that they would allow this Appropriation of \$25,000 with the understanding that if \$10,000 were to come from CIRMA then the Fire Department would only be using the \$15,000 of the said appropriation.

Hope made the motion to approve as stated and Mary seconded.

-Approve to send to Council Floor as stated-

Rob then discussed the potential bonding for a new fire engine. He explained that they would be replacing a 16 year old fire truck. He also stated that if they were able to commit to this purchase now, Marion (company in which they purchase their trucks) would lock in last year's price.

Carl recommended bonding this purchase and spread the payments out over a ten year period since the trucks' life expectancy is more than ten years. He explained this year's budget is going to reflect a debt payment for a new vehicle that was purchased last year and trying to absorb this full amount into this budget will be a huge burden on the Central District tax payers.

Hope asked if the Fire Department could use some of their Fund Balance towards this purchase.

Carl stated that he would like to wait until the new Chief starts before using the Fund Balance; funds may be needed to reduce the tax burden in this district.

-Approve to send to Council Floor-

- **Board of Education – discussion of bonding for purchase of PowerSchool information system for \$133,484.37 and MHS wired and wireless upgrade for \$337,537.00; Appropriation Request for \$386,000 to cover Microbial Growth costs**

Patricia Charles Superintendent of Schools spoke regarding the necessary wired and wireless upgrades needed for MHS as well as the purchase of Power School System.

Mary asked why this wasn't included in their budget.

Tom stated that the Council had agreed to assist the BOE in purchases to upgrade the Middletown schools; working relationship.

Michael Skott clarified that the yearly expenses are included in the Tech budget, just not the initial purchase.

Mary clarified that the BOE budget would be coming in flat, but if for some reason they had a surplus of funds she asked for them to be returned to the City side.

Dave made the motion to approve bonding the Power School System for \$133,484.37 and MHS wired/wireless upgrades for \$337,537.00, Deb seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to the Council Floor-

Pat's second Appropriation request for \$386,000 to cover the Microbial Growth costs from the Moody School remediation.

Carl had already spoken to Gene Nocera, BOE Chairman in regards to this matter. Carl explained that the City would be issuing the BOE monies through a Grant Fund that way the City isn't left with an MBR where it has to give the BOE these funds every year. Carl also stated to Gene that when these funds are reimbursed by the insurance company that the BOE would forward the monies to the City. Gene was in complete agreement.

Carl discussed that a loan can't be given to cover this cost it has to be done as an Appropriation, and if and when the BOE is reimbursed from the insurance company the monies will be given back to the City.

Mary made the motion to approve and Deb seconded. Approved unanimously.

-Approved unanimously to send to Council Floor-

- **Human Relations – request for approval of mandatory attendance of 30 City employees at Sexual Harassment Prevention Training, total cost \$960.00**

Faith Jackson explained the mandatory Sexual Harassment Prevention Training is done by an independent company and held at the Chamber of Commerce.

Hope made the motion to approve the \$960 and Mary seconded.

-Approved to send to the to the Council Floor-

- **Central Communications - Appropriation Request for \$14,300 to fill position of Dispatcher Trainee position; Overtime Analysis FY05-06 through present**

Wayne Bartolotta discussed the Appropriation request for \$14,300 to fill the position of Dispatcher Trainee as well as the overtime analysis report.

Hope made the motion to approve and Deb seconded.

-Approved to send to Council Floor-

- **Assessor – explanation of revaluation “rounding” of property values and assessments**

Damon Braasch stated that to the best of his knowledge the company Vision hired to do the revaluation of properties is not rounding up their figures.

Deb stated that she has been approached by many people stating that in fact the company is rounding up the square footage, adding bathrooms, pools or sheds to their properties. She would like Damon to look further into this matter.

- Informational-

- **Public Works – Emergency equipment repair to Vac-All**

Deb made the motion to approve and Mary seconded.

-Approved unanimously to send to Council Floor-

- **F & G Committee/ Councilwoman Kleckowski – discussion of use of the Alliance Grant and the minimum budget requirement for the BOE**

Carl spoke regarding the Alliance Grant monies of \$1.9 million this year for the BOE and \$3.1 million for next year. The Council is required to turn over any ECS increase to the BOE. This money was never in the City's budget, it went straight to the BOE.

-Informational Only-

- **Teamster Upgrades**

Hope inquired what the pro-rated cost would be for the upgrades.

Carl responded roughly \$25,000 February through June 30 and \$61,000 for the year.

Carl also stated that there is room in the salary reserve this year to absorb this cost.

Carl also explained to the committee members that if for some reason the Council votes this request down then the Teamsters will be going to arbitration and it is binding. The cost for the Arbitrator is \$600.00 per hour – per Wayne.

Tom made the request for Carl to let any Director know that all Finance requests need to come through Finance and Government first, before going to the said commissions

4. Regular Reports

- Transfer of Funds/BOE Transfers
- General Fund Appropriations
- City's Investments
- Monthly Expenditure Summary Report
- Tax Collection Recap Report
- Department Over-Time Reports
- Quarterly Reports – checking account
 - Arts & Culture
 - Senior Services

- **Information Only-**

5. Other

Tom made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Deb seconded, approved unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting February 26, 2014, 7:00 pm in Room 208

Respectfully
Submitted by

Tracy Vess on behalf of Carl R. Erlacher

Meeting: Track 41-69